



## Profiles in Wellness



### **Gayla S. Woody** North Carolina

In July 2004 I attended the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging annual conference. I heard the Centers for Disease Control talk about obesity as the fastest growing epidemic since 1990. I heard Assistant Secretary of the US Administration on Aging, Josephina Carbonell talk about the You Can! campaign, a national health promotion campaign. I left that conference certain that health and wellness initiatives had to be a primary focus for the aging network.

At the time, I was forty pounds overweight, in my early fifties and had a high incidence of diabetes on both sides of my family. Personally, I knew I was facing a high probability of late life onset of diabetes, possibly if I lost weight, and probably if I didn't. Professionally, if I was going to "talk the talk", I had to "walk the walk".

I lost the forty pounds, changed my eating habits, and implemented a regular weight-lifting regime. It has been a year and a half and I have maintained my weight loss. So many people have noticed the change in me and commented that it has inspired them. I find it very exciting to see change happen – one person at a time!

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